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than noble, more susceptible than generous, capable of a shadowy grace and a fitful brilliancy, but without the power to dignify and elevate sensibility. His fits of depression, his recourse to amusement, his favorite watchword, "*Vive la bagatelle*," his caprice and trifling, his French view of life, his alternate gayety and blue-devils, attest one of those ill-balanced characters, amusing in society, ingenious in literature, but unsatisfactory in more intimate relations and higher spheres.

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- ART. V.—1. *Schamyl als Feldherr, Sultan, und Prophet; und der Caucasus*. VON DR. FRIEDRICH WAGNER. Leipzig. 1854.
2. *Der Caucasus und das Land der Kosaken*. VON MOZITZ WAGNER. Dresden. 1848.
3. *Journal of a Residence in Circassia*. By JAMES STANISLAUS BELL. London. 1840.
4. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1853. "*La Guerre de Caucase*."
5. *Russia and England*. By JOHN REYNELL MORELL. London. 1854.

THE Eastern War has given a fresh interest to the war of independence in Circassia. In this "cradle of the races" there has been going on for more than twenty-five years a struggle, which, for the persistency of the one party, and the energy, enthusiasm, and obstinacy of the other, is not surpassed in those chapters from which the schoolboy wrests the story of Greek and Persian battles. The poor, partly civilized tribes of Circassia, with no very lofty ideal of freedom to fight for, have succeeded, hitherto, in protecting themselves against the encroachments of Russia. They have steadily refused to pay taxes and to do homage to the Czar. They have laughed at his proclamations and defied his armies. They have held themselves aloof from him in all respects, so that now the Caucasus lifts its mountain summits, like islands of the sea, above a wide waste of Russian provinces.

In the present article we propose to give a brief account

of this war, and of the parties engaged in it, especially of that remarkable man whose eloquence and courage have driven his countrymen to make successful resistance against an almost overwhelming enemy.

It is only as Circassia appears on the map of ancient history, that its shape and position are popularly known. A mere glance at its situation on the modern atlas will reveal its geographical importance. It is a long arm of land thrust out by Europe into Asia. The Caspian Sea washes it on the east. The broad Black Sea, with its border cities, its far-flowing rivers, and classic shores, bounds it on the west. Across the centre, diagonally, from sea to sea, the lofty spinal ridge of the Caucasus bisects the entire country. Through narrow gorges of the mountains run the two great highways by which Southern Russia journeys into Persia and Arabia. When the caravan of merchandise, toiling up, reaches the summit of the mountain boundary, it commands both continents at a glance,—on the north, Europe, with its indomitable, bustling, onward life,—on the south, Asia, torpid, emasculate, sleeping a child's sleep in the sun.

What venerable associations gather about Circassia and the Caucasus!

“The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,”

point us to this far country of myth and classic story. Here is the local habitation assigned to some of the most sacred traditions of the ancient world. On one of the highest of these hills,—the inexpugnable fortresses set up by nature against Russian aggression,—the ark of Noah, it is fabled, first grounded and hung poised for a moment, before drifting southward to Mount Ararat. Here is the region to which the Argo sailed that childish voyage which looms so grandly through the mists of Grecian fable. Here is

“the outmost tract of earth,
The Scythian waste, the pathless solitude,”

where Prometheus was chained to the bald, bleak rock, with a vulture battenning on his liver, because he had stolen heavenly fire. Here dwelt the Amazons, first of the “strong-

minded." And at the southernmost verge of the country Ararat raises his snow-capped brow high into the Asiatic heavens.

From time immemorial, Circassia has been the place of refuge to oppressed tribes, fleeing from the Mongols on the north, or from the Arabs and Persians on the south, inso-much that at least seven distinct races have found a home there. Up to quite a recent date these tribes had dwelt apart from one another, with mutual jealousies as hearty as the blood-feuds of the Scottish clans. They had been unanimous on one point only,—obstinate hostility to Russia. Even in this they had no union. Each race fought its own battles and spoke its own dialect, in high disdain of the others.

Of the two portions into which Circassia is divided by the Caucasus, that along the northern mountains is called by the Russians Tcherkessia; that along the southern end of the chain has received the general appellation of Tchetchenia; names derived from the most prominent race of each portion. Of the northern races, the Adighes, who live upon the Kuban, about Anapa, are regarded as of the purest Circassian blood. They are partly Pagans and partly Mahometans. Abhasia lies farther south, skirting the Black Sea. Its religion is a mixture of Pagan and Mahometan, the Christianity which the Emperor Justinian introduced among its people having quite died out. The Ossetes, whom the Empress Elizabeth bribed to become converts to the Christian religion, are confined to the central parts of the Caucasus, around Kasbec, "the white mountain." In Tchetchenia the most important races are the Lesghians and the Daghestans, the homes of the latter being inscribed within the loop formed by the river Koissu and the Caspian. Springing from the centre of Northern Circassia the two great rivers Terek and Kuban flow off at different angles northwardly, falling, the one into the Caspian at Kisliar, the other into the Black Sea. With their shores the control of the Russian Cossacks ceases, and on their southern banks the resistance of Circassia begins. South of Circassia are Mingrelia, Imeretia, and Georgia, abject provinces, humbled at the feet of the Czar.

The manner of life of the Circassian races is of the old-world kind, nomadic and pastoral. Occupation is the tenure by which their lands are held. He is the wealthiest who is the strongest and boldest, for he has the most numerous captives for his slaves. He is wisest among them whose beard is white with experience. The gradations in rank are few, and not very strictly regarded. The people all belong to fraternities, each of from fifteen to fifteen hundred members, who are bound to assist one another in whatever emergency may arise. When the judges of their court, whose sessions are held on the grass under a spreading oak, have condemned one to a fine of two hundred oxen for the crime of murder, his fraternity contribute to the payment. When a member is slain, his wife remains the property of his fraternity, or, if she gets permission to marry into another, her children must continue where they were born. From the vices of all half-civilized people, — low cunning, treachery, and what the phrenologists call “secretiveness,” — the Circassians are not exempt, nor are they over-nice in speaking the truth. When they are about to start on a predatory excursion, a leader is chosen by ballot, and his authority ceases upon their return. As soon as the crop of barley is gathered, the warrior has no objection to change his residence for “fresh fields and pastures new.” He mounts his horse, drives his cattle before him, and suffers the women of his house to jog on humbly behind. If an honest foreigner makes them a visit, no one can predict how he will come off; for, as the whim strikes them, they may worship him as an ambassador of prodigious authority, or, taking him for a Russian spy, they may hide him away in a cave until some fair daughter of his keeper pities him and runs away with him. Their *aouls*, or villages, overhang the perilous crags like swallows’ nests. The tilling of a corn-patch on the mountain-side, — a wild foray with rifle and sword upon a Cossack *stanitza*, — a hunting bout, — a trading voyage across the sea to Sinope or Samsun, — such are the phases of their life from year to year.

The Circassian warriors are remarkable for their strength and athletic proportions; and the women are the most beautiful under the sun. The legend says that, when Allah wished

to stock the celestial harem with the loveliest daughters of the earth, he instructed an Imam to journey over the world, and select forty of the choicest. This commissioner went first into Frankistan, and carried off the daughter of the king of the Ingliz. When the English monarch gave chase, Allah threw dust in his eyes. Having culled the loveliest maids of Germany, he came down to Circassia. But on reaching Gori, near Tiflis, he was smitten with a great passion for one of his fair prisoners, so that, unwilling to surrender her, even to the celestial ruler, he treacherously detained her with the rest. He was punished with death, but the maidens remained where he left them, and from them was born a race of mortals as beautiful as themselves. In a poor family, living in a stone hut, with the earth for a floor, cooking their mutton over a fire built in the centre of the single room, eating it from a clean board, and sleeping on a mat at night, may be found females as faultless in form and complexion as a statue of Venus, and with that native grace that lies beyond all art. Alas for them that their beauty is for sale! As the face of a gold or silver coin represents to us a certain quantity of meat or wool, the face of a pretty Circassian maiden stands for more or less salt or gunpowder. She hides her sweet countenance behind her veil, imprisons her milk-white feet in envious slippers, and goes to Constantinople to be sold, as gayly as our country girls go to Lowell. It is a rough voyage over the sea, and that she dreads; the rest is the unread romance of uncertainty. From tender childhood she has heard fine tales of the splendors of the royal city, and she sees the rough hill-tops on which her life was passed in toil and danger sink behind the receding ship without a tear of regret. "Take her," said the master of a family to an American traveller, who was gazing with admiration at his sister, a girl of twelve years, — "I will not sell her, but I will give her to you, if you will be kind to her. What can she expect, what is there for her to look forward to, but to become the wife of some poor boatman like myself, and always live in poverty?"

The claims of Russia upon Circassia are founded on the treaty of Adrianople in 1829, by which Turkey ceded to the

Emperor all the territory situated between the Kuban and the Black Sea. But it has been very conclusively proved, by statements which we need not recapitulate, that Turkey herself had no rights of government over Circassia, and therefore could transfer none. The Sultan had indeed, before this treaty, been regarded by the Mahometan races as their religious head, but as having no more civil authority than the Pope possesses over the Catholic nations of Europe; and after the treaty of Adrianople the Tcherkessians ceased to look upon him as their friend, and took an oath to remain faithful to one another in resisting all the overtures of Russia, unless sanctioned by their unanimous concurrence.

But long before the treaty of Adrianople, Russia had reached an arm into Circassia. Peter the Great built five *stanitzas* along the Terek in 1711; a few years later, the fort at Stavropol, now the head-quarters of the northern wing of the army, was erected; and these *stanitzas* were gradually multiplied, until there ran an unbroken line of fortresses from sea to sea. Heraclius, the king of Georgia, submitted to Russia in 1801, and from that time Tiflis became the residence of the commander-in-chief of the army of the Caucasus. His house was built upon the ruins of the palaces of the Georgian kings.

Thus, with Russian provinces on the north as well as on the south, with a line of forts gradually extending along the entire length of the Caspian shore, with seventeen *kreposts* between Anapa and Souchum Kala on the Black Sea, and with a prohibition laid upon their intercourse with Turkey, the dwellers upon the Caucasus were in the condition of that prisoner of the Inquisition whose dungeon-walls contracted inch by inch, so as at last to crush him within their stony embrace.

The Circassians dwelt securely in the ravines of their hills or on steep acclivities, where the cannon of the Russians, "making the earth to tremble and the fruit drop from the trees," could not reach them. They made continual reprisals upon the enemy. His forts were never out of a state of siege. The five hundred or thousand men, who formed their respective garrisons, lived the wretched life of exiles all winter,

when storms suspended their water communication with Russia, and in summer a soldier could not stray outside the walls without being picked off by an invisible rifle, or carried away into hopeless captivity. Spring with its unwholesome winds blew fevers into their bones, and the army of occupation in the forts, amounting to twenty thousand men, needed to be largely reinforced every season.

The Cossack *stanitzas* on the Terek and Kuban suffered even greater hardships. The colonists worked, eat, slept, with one hand on the musket; yet all their watchfulness could not save them from the sudden attacks of the Tcherkessians, whose mode of warfare was as insidious as that of the North American Indians. Hundreds of mounted warriors would dash across the river on a dark night, set fire to the houses of the little village, and, wailing like jackals, post themselves where they could hew down all who preferred to try their mercy to that of the fire. They would steal back with their booty and prisoners as suddenly as they came, and before daybreak vanish beyond the mountains.

After Georgia became a Russian dependency, Prince Zizianoff, a Georgian by birth, was made Governor-General of the Caucasus. He managed wisely, and brought Abhasia to a state of submission, but was assassinated by the Persians, as he was on his way to receive the keys of the fortress of Bâku. He was succeeded by General Yermoloff, who attempted to engraft European energy and industry upon the Trans-Caucasian stock. German colonies were planted, with the design of placing before the natives an example of rural economy. The General expected, by the diffusion of knowledge, to inspire in some the ambition to command in the army, for which the natives were, by their knowledge of the country and its language, much better fitted than Russian officers. Yermoloff was summoned home before he had matured his plans. After him, Paskiewitsch conducted the campaign against the Turks of Asia with some success.

Baron Rosen, the next governor, on taking the command in 1830, found new difficulties to encounter. A fanatical priest, calling himself Kasi Mollah, appeared in Daghestan, preaching a reform in the religion of Mahomet. He gath-

ered around him a company of believers, called *murids*, or disciples, who never were weary of the vast work which they felt themselves appointed to perform, and were eager even for the honors of martyrdom. The seed which they sowed was strewn in grateful furrows. The Tchetchenses, Lesghians, and Avarians awoke from their long inaction, and broke into open revolt.

The new doctrines were not unknown in Daghestan. *Sufism*, a kind of corrupted Mahometanism, or religious animal magnetism, which excites dreamy ecstasies in the minds of its believers, whereby they hold direct communion with God, had for thirty years found disciples among the southern races. The ulemas of Daghestan had dreamed out an entirely new religion, similar to that of Mahomet, but superior to it, which reconciled the dissenting sects of Omar and Ali, by substituting itself for both. These teachers assumed that there are three elements in man, which must be distinguished and attended to separately,—the physical, mental, and moral. The lowest of these elements is the physical, which, that it may not get the better of the other two, has a book of laws called the *Sharykat*, or Bridle, to which it is subject, and which curbs it within proper limits. The mental element—comprising the intellectual faculties—has also its directory code, which keeps it from getting entire control over the others. This book is the *Maarifat*. Finally, the moral element, the highest of the three, has for its guide the book which the Moslems call *Tarykat*. All that sanctifies the thoughts of man, all that ennobles his feelings and draws him towards perfection, is contained in this book. Of the four gradations which the Sufis have to ascend in order to reach a perfect idea of the Deity, the first is obedience to the *Sharykat*; and by this law the mass of the people are governed. The *Murids* stand next; to them the requirements of the *Sharykat* have become a second nature; they need no such guide; they give alms and perform their ablutions, not because of the law, but because they perceive that these offices are good. The *Naibs*, the viceroys of Schamyl, have ascended the third step, and on¹ the fourth and highest Schamyl stands alone. “He is in immediate, actual com-

munication with the Deity. His words are God's words, and his commands are the commands of the Lord. He is the sun whence the Naibs, his moons, derive their light, and, surrounded by the Murids, his satellites, penetrate the night of the nation."

Hadji Ismail was the first to reduce this religion to form in Circassia. He revealed the new faith to Mollah Mohammed, by whom it was transmitted to Kasi Mollah. According to Hadji Ismail, the common interpretation of the meaning of the Koran was no longer to be received as the rule of faith, but Kasi Mollah was himself the Law and the Word. He alone conversed with Allah. Many were led by the preaching of the Murids to desire an initiation into the mystic life, from spiritual motives alone; but when the whole force of the enthusiasm which they had called forth was directed against the Russian invaders, when death to the Muscovite and honor to Allah were made the terms of temporal safety and eternal salvation, a fire of fanaticism was kindled over the whole of Eastern Circassia. "Who can serve both Allah and the Muscovites?" it was asked. "All your watchings and prayers, all your pilgrimages to Mecca, avail you naught, so long as the eye of a Muscovite looks upon them. Your marriages are bad, your children are bastards, and the Koran is your destruction, so long as there is a Muscovite among you."

Animated by these hearty teachings, the disciples, with the Mollah at their head, attacked Tarki on the Caspian shore. They burst into the town, and, cutting off the water which supplied the garrison, a party of them were on the point of forcing open the powder-magazine, when a grenade from the fort fell into the midst of them, the powder exploded, and most of the Circassians were destroyed. Just then a Tartar stole out nimbly from the fort, and, on the pretence of being a deserter, passed through the remaining army of the besiegers, and brought General Kachanoff to the rescue. After two days of hard fighting, the siege was raised. Kasi Mollah subsequently plundered the fortress of Kisliar on the Terek. In 1832, three thousand of his followers maintained a terrible resistance to Baron Rosen in the village of Hermentschuk.

The town had been already taken, when the Murid, Muley Abdurrahman, sought refuge with his men in a wooden tower, which they defended until the shells that were rained upon it set it in a blaze, and the Murid and all his fellow-soldiers perished together. Soon after this event, Kasi Mollah was killed at the siege of Himri.

Hamsad Bey, who succeeded to the priestly authority of Kasi Mollah, was not equal to him in eloquence or in practical skill. The newly revived hopes of Circassia drooped again. There was, as yet, no union among the races,—no systematized resistance, no common leader; while the Czar, having just finished the dissection of Poland, turned southward with keen appetite, and sent thither such swarms of soldiers as seemed to make the entire subjugation of the races in Caucasus a mere question of time.

A master spirit was wanting in this emergency,—one whose potent hand might strike the discordant strings of the popular passions and bring them into harmony; one capable of reaching down to the heart of the whole people, and able to turn the influence thus gained to the best practical account; one possessing “the vision and the faculty divine,” which lifts the great man of such crises above the level of his fellows, so that he takes in all the present and all the future at a glance, and seems to speak, not from his own conviction, but from an inspiration that comes from beyond and above him. Such a man was Schamyl, who now appeared upon the scene.

“The zeal of Nature never cools,
Nor is she thwarted of her ends;
When gapped and dulled her cheaper tools,
Then she a saint and prophet spends.”

This mysterious man, now in the decline of a long life that has been throughout “a battle and a march,” is the lawgiver, the general, the high-priest of his people. He is more than a Mahomet to them. He beckons, and thousands press forward to do his will; he speaks, and they surrender to him their lives. “Flames sparkle from his eyes, and flowers are scattered from his lips,” says a native poet, describing him. A higher power, as his countrymen think, inspires him; a

mystical, unseen Divinity utters itself through him ; the God of the faithful acts with his arm, speaks through his lips. He had once been rescued almost by a miracle. Baron Rosen was storming Himri, one of the mountain villages of Eastern Circassia. One after another of its towers reeled and fell under the assault of heavy cannon, and at last the venerable priest, Kasi Mollah, was hewn down, and all that were with him. They had fought like desperate tigers, and sung the Koran to the clashing of their swords, but the old man bore no arms. They found him as he had fallen, with hands upstretched to heaven, as in a last appeal. Prostrate by his side, pierced with two bullets, thrust through with a bayonet, unconscious, apparently dead, lay Schamyl, the sole survivor of that Russian victory.

Schamyl was thirty-seven years old when he became Imam of the Caucasus. His arm and his faith had been tried and not found wanting. He had always been remarkable for his stateliness of demeanor and the melancholy seclusion in which he lived. In his boyhood he was sensitive, proud, ambitious, and eager to excel his comrades in athletic games. He loved in the evening to climb the desolate rocks of Himri, and there to commune with Nature in her solitude. His youth, like that of Mahomet, had been instructed by the religious teachings of a wise old man. Djelal Eddin had inspired him with a love of philosophical study, and with enthusiastic belief in the doctrines of the Koran, as modified by the Safis. He became one of the most ardent of the Murids. He was the best preacher and the toughest fighter of them all. He went before all former priests in knowledge of the science of war, and in that greatest of arts, the power of conciliation. He built for himself a sort of nest upon a lofty height overhanging the river Koissu, and stocked it with the munitions of war. There he brooded over his plans. Spies brought him constant information of the Russian movements, and when the right opportunity came, he swooped with his army, like a condor, from the cliff, and woe to the Russians whom he encountered in a narrow pass ! The white robe of Schamyl was like a death-signal to them. His strength and suppleness of body well fitted him to be the leader in such

forays; he was the swiftest mountain-climber and the best horseman on the Caucasus. By his shrewd management and his unremitted success he acquired a consummate control over his men. If persuasion failed upon them, he accomplished his designs by violence. Executioners, with shouldered clubs, attended him at the meetings of the people, and knocked on the head all who dared to utter a word against his plans. Traitors, seduced by Russian gold, were buried alive. Whole villages even, which had been found guilty of a leaning towards Russia, were demolished in a single night. But the faithful were rewarded with presents at the hands of their master, and allured with the promise of rewards such as eye hath not seen, in the land that lies beyond the River of Death. Emissaries diffused themselves through the various mountain tribes, proclaiming the victories of the Imam of the Caucasus, preaching up the holy war, and collecting tribute. "Mahomet is the first prophet, and Schamyl is the second," was the cry of their enthusiasm.

The tribes that had before lived apart and in jealousy of one another, united under Schamyl. They only needed a common battle-field, and they found this great seal of their union at Akhulgo,—the rocky fortress on the Koissu where the prophet had fixed his residence. General Grabbe, at that time commanding in Daghestan, determined to dislodge the mountaineers from this strong-hold. He expected, at least, to capture their leader.

In the middle of July, 1839, he led a large army along the river-banks until they arrived opposite the high, steep cliffs on which the life of Circassian liberty had taken its stand. There they halted. Around them was the quiet mountain scenery. Far above, the foliage of the oak and beech glistered and nodded over the dark declivities. The only sound was the rushing and gurgling of a brook leaping from rock to rock. The Koissu ran below the fortress, half surrounding it. Both shores were soon lined with men, mortars, and cannon, and the siege began. A storm of bombs, balls, and Congreve rockets was rained upon the walls, toppling over the fortifications and rending apart the stone houses of which the fortress consisted; but still its defenders

saved themselves from immediate death by retreating into the fissures of the rock. Four weeks the siege went on, and still no surrender. But the Russian leader depended upon a force slower, yet surer, than powder and ball, — starvation.

Meantime the Northern army, encamped beneath the fort, grew fat and merry over their mountain forage. The Cossack trolled out a love-song while cooking his evening pottage, and the gray-coated musketeers filled up the intervals in the respite of cannon and trumpet with their half-religious, half-warlike choruses. This merriment was now and then interrupted by a well-aimed shot from above, which suddenly stretched the gay singer at the feet of his comrades. Upon this, all crossed themselves devoutly, and the half-sung chorus died upon their lips, until the captain would cry gruffly, "What's the matter with you? Can't you keep on!" — and the song rolled off as glibly as before. A feeling of desperation began to take possession of the garrison. They foresaw that famine would conquer all whom the cannon spared, and a fierce enthusiasm lighted their hollow eyes. Sometimes, into the midst of the Russian camp a Circassian leaped, like an apparition, with weapons in both hands and a dagger clutched between his teeth, and, before the officers could overcome the surprise caused by his sudden appearance, he plied his arms so nimbly, as thrice and four times to avenge in advance his own death, before he sank under the strokes of Russian sabres, with the applauding cheers of his friends, on the rock above, quivering in his dying ears.

At last the storming began. Three terraces, rising one above the other, were the foremost obstacles to be overcome by the Russians, and, of the 1500 men who made the first assault, only 150 were able to retreat in safety. The third charge carried the first and second terraces, and then came the tug of war. The firing ceased. With the bayonet, the shashka, the dagger, hand to hand, they strove and wrestled together. There was no noise save the cries of victory or of agony. The smoke rolled up like a curtain from the face of the rock. High up the cliff, the Circassian women, in the last extremity of despair, with bared breasts and hair streaming over their shoulders, poured down volleys of stones upon

the heads of their advancing foes. "I saw a woman," says an eyewitness of the scene, "suddenly grasp the little child that clung to her garments; I saw her dash its head to pieces against a projecting rock, and, hurling it, with a wild shriek, down the abyss, leap after it."

Akhulgo was taken, and the carnage that followed repaid the hungry Cossacks for their long delay. No mercy was asked, and none would have been given. But among the dead Schamyl was not to be found. What miracle had saved him again? After a long search he was discovered, with some of his Murids, lodged in a deep chasm of the rock overhanging the river, to which there was no access but by the rope that had been drawn up after them. As the Russian leader was intent upon capturing Schamyl, living or dead, he stationed a guard of horse and infantry on both banks of the river. Then it was that the three companions of Schamyl performed that act of unsurpassed heroism and devotion, which will cling to the memories of future generations. They knew that, if they were all made prisoners, it was probable that they might be ransomed and returned, but that their leader must be inevitably lost to them for ever. They agreed to give their lives to save his. One dark night, the Russians upon the watch saw a raft put out from the cave, and lowered down until it floated upon the river. A man then let himself down upon it; a second form descended, and at last a third, dressed in the white robe of Schamyl, cautiously followed. Immediately the guards, having remained silent until now, rushed forward; the Cossack cavalry plunged into the stream; the infantry skirted the shores; a moment—and the three men upon the raft were shot or stabbed with a thousand deaths. But to the inexpressible vexation of the Russians, on examining the faces of the slain, it was found that neither of them was that of the terrible Schamyl. They discovered too late, that, while the attention of the whole troop was directed towards the three men, the real Schamyl, the one object against whom the whole expedition had been prepared, had lowered himself quietly down from the cave to the stream and swam uninjured to the opposite shore.

After the loss of Akhulgo, the Imam exerted himself to gain

from the Russian general some terms of pacification. The latter would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender. Schamyl then passed, like another Peter the Hermit, across the mountains, preaching to the Tcherkessians in the Turkish language, and endeavoring to arouse them to their common danger. But he failed to overcome their private jealousies, and the blood-feuds of race and family. General Sass at that time commanded on the Kuban. His policy was to meet the wily natives on their own ground; to oppose cunning by cunning, and to employ the system of espionage which they had used so successfully against the Cossacks; to fall upon them by night; to delude them by feigned retreats, and never to attack them when an attack was expected. Once he pretended to have died, after a regular course of sickness, and when the Tcherkessians had assured themselves of the truth of this report by a view of his splendid coffin, covered with the well-known hat and orders of the general, and had returned to celebrate the propitious event by an appropriate jubilee, by night, the ghost of the general, at the head of a most substantial column of soldiers, stole across the Kuban, and came down upon them "like the wolf on the fold." This man was a perpetual terror to the Northern races. Children grew quiet at the name of Sass. He was superseded in command, however, by Williamenoff; who, in 1837, proceeded to break the spirits of the mountaineers by words such as these: "Russia has conquered France, put her sons to death, and made captives of her daughters. England will never give any aid to the Circassians, because she depends on Russia for her daily bread. There are only two powers in the universe, — God in heaven and the Emperor upon earth; and though the arch of heaven should fall, there are Russians enough to hold it up on the points of their bayonets."

But to the Eastern Circassians this trumpet was blown in vain. They looked up to their hills, and laughed to scorn the paper bravery of the Muscovite. The blood that was shed at Akhulgo washed out their petty jealousies. The eloquence, the daring, and, above all, the miraculous escapes of their leader, and the success that always followed in his

steps, made the mountaineers regard him with a veneration little short of idolatry. Schamyl was their messenger from God. He proved himself not altogether unworthy of their simple homage. Deep in the forests of Itchkeria he again took up his position. He surrounded his person with a body guard of one thousand of his hottest enthusiasts. He divided the region over which his influence extended into districts, and appointed one of his Naibs governor over each, whose duty was to make regular reports to his master, as the great head of government. He established a system of posts for transmitting the earliest intelligence of the enemy's movements, and raised a standing army of five or six thousand men. All males, from fifteen to fifty years old, were trained continually in horsemanship and the use of arms, ready to defend their homes in case of attack, or to follow their leader in his hostile expeditions. Of ten families, one furnished the man; the remaining nine equipped him for service. Honorary orders were bestowed as the meed of the faithful, and medals stamped with poetical inscriptions were hung upon the breasts of the brave. When Schamyl moved abroad, his guards walled him in on every side. When he retired for prayer, thousands waited outside of the mosque in reverent silence. Then Mahomet appeared to him in the form of a dove, whispered sweet encouragement in his ear, gave him new commands, and revealed fresh mysteries of the faith; all of which he rehearsed, with his wonderful eloquence, to the multitudes that thronged to welcome his re-appearance.

Writers who have seen Schamyl have much to say of the majesty of his person and manners. His stature is not above the middle height, and in his regular, handsome features, and white complexion, there is nothing of the fanatic or enthusiast. He possesses entire control over himself, and whether he is bestowing rewards or pronouncing the death-sentence, he maintains the same imperturbable composure. He never betrays either anger, uneasiness, or fear. A great calm rests upon him.

"His face is like a star,
That, from its incommunicable height,
Looks coldly on the feverish world below."

One of the most thorough victories which the Circassians have gained over the Russians, under the influence of Schamyl, was won in the spring of 1842. Rosen had been supplanted at Tiflis, by Golowin, in his command of the army of the Caucasus. Golowin had disagreed with Grabbe, his under officer, as to the best mode of conducting the war, and Nicholas, with the view of determining between the different measures proposed by each, sent Prince Tchernicheff, his minister of war, on a tour of inspection through the Caucasus. Before this officer had reached the left wing of the army, and while he was halting a little distance from Dargo, Grabbe resolved, by a brilliant victory, to vindicate the system which he advocated over the defensive mode of warfare recommended by Golowin.

Dargo was a collection of seventy houses, perched on the brow of a hill in Itchkeria, not far west of Akhulgo, where Schamyl had fixed his abode after being driven from the latter place. It contained a favorite shrine of Mahometan worship, and pilgrims from the remotest aouls of Lesghistan and Daghestan journeyed thither, to pray in the mosque, or to bring word to their warrior-priest of the movements of the enemy. Grabbe set out with a force of 8,600 men. They moved regularly to the scene of action. During the first day's march not a shot was fired, nor was any sign given by the mountaineers to indicate alarm at their approach. Occasionally, at a secure distance, one of them would be detected leaning over some rocky parapet, and reconnoitring, as if from idle curiosity, the array of bayonets in the defile below; but no objection appeared to be taken by him to their farther progress. The second day's march was performed in the same manner. Suddenly, at midnight, as the soldiers were sleeping around the embers of the bivouac fire, the darkness gleamed with the red flash of rifles. The battalions were called to arms, and the men fired at random upon the invisible enemy, until they vanished as unexpectedly as they had appeared. At daybreak the march was resumed, until noon of the same day, when their flanks were again attacked just as they entered a woody ravine. The firing was more fatal than that of the previous night. The Rus-

sian wagons were filled with the wounded. Not half the distance to the village was yet accomplished, — the difficulties of the road increased with every step, — the number of the enemy multiplied each moment, and they fought with more furious courage, until several of his officers besought Grabbe to abandon the march and order a retreat. The general thought of Tchernicheff, waiting to hear of his victory, and refused to go back. On the third day, the danger to his army of total annihilation became so imminent, that he reluctantly gave orders for a retreat, although they had advanced within view of the little fortress of Itchkeria. As soon as the advanced guard wheeled about to descend, the fury of the mountaineers broke through all restraint. They dropped their rifles, and, with their shaskas and daggers, hurled themselves upon the enemy. They speared themselves, in blind rage, upon the Russian bayonets, charging down upon the centre of the columns. Grabbe left both his wounded and his dead behind. His men threw away knapsack and belt. Fainting with heat and thirst and long fatigue, they straggled in disorder down the declivities, with the mountaineers howling in their rear.

The Circassians did not exceed six thousand in number; but they possessed such a thorough acquaintance with every nook and winding of the road, as gave them every possible advantage for attack. At length they succeeded in wresting six pieces of cannon from the Russian artillery. Then Lieutenant Wittert, stung with shame at surrendering “the Emperor’s pistols” to a band of savages, drove a couple of battalions up the hill, and succeeded in bringing the guns back, after a desperate struggle. As the army drew near the open country, the onslaught became less violent. Just as they issued from the forests of beech and oak, Schamyl appeared, at the head of a body of cavalry. He had been summoning his adherents from over the mountains, to hasten to the rescue of Dargo. Fortunately for the Russian army, he had returned too late. Grabbe managed to conduct his men for the rest of the way in safety. They entered the town of Girsels, not, as they were expected, with victorious banners, but with muffled drums. They had left two thousand of their number for food

to mountain birds. Of their sixty officers, thirty-six had fallen. Tchernicheff was present to witness their return. He immediately repaired to St. Petersburg, and both Grabbe and Golowin were recalled from their command.

After this victory, for several months, Schamyl maintained a dignified retirement. Achwerdi Mahomet and other chosen disciples were sent forth to preach to the Kabardians and Tcherkessians, and to stir them into rebellion. They found themselves unable to cope with the influence of Russia in that direction. Then Schamyl broke from his seclusion. He entered the fort of Unsorilla, and desolated all Avaria. Neidhardt, successor of Golowin, took the field against him, but his Fabian policy was quite lost upon his cunning, active antagonist. He was always a day too late, and after a signal defeat, he too was recalled in disgrace.

No Russian officer has done so much to promote the interests of his country in Circassia as Michael Woronzoff, who, since the recall of Golowin, has been commander-in-chief of the Czar's army at Tiflis. His first military enterprise was directed against Dargo, the aoul of Schamyl, in his unsuccessful attack upon which, in 1842, Grabbe had lost his reputation. He fought his way up to it, rod by rod. Schamyl commanded the mountaineers, and his presence always inspires them with fury. His Murids fought as if they were content to die if they might only have the satisfaction of sending out of the world a goodly number of their enemy. When the Russians had conquered the long ascent, they found that the inhabitants of the little village had fled, leaving all the combustible parts of it in flames, and Schamyl, with his men, had taken a position upon a neighboring hill. There, armed with a few old cannon, the long hidden spoils of some Russian fort, they poured down shot upon the heads of the conquerors of Dargo. A relay of provisions being expected by the Russians, Lieutenant Klugenau was despatched, with six battalions, to escort it into camp. They were fallen upon by Schamyl, and every biscuit was captured. A general engagement ensued. This novel mode of fighting took Woronzoff by surprise. The mountaineers blocked up every narrow pass with their swords; they started from the hollows of

rocks; they fired their rifles from the tops of trees. Woronzoff was like a man in a cage of wild beasts, with the door bolted on the outside. However, Freitag reached him with a reinforcement, in time to save him from the fate of the unlucky Grabbe.

Dargo having been taken, Schamyl once more exerted himself upon the recreant provinces. The countries of Great and Lesser Kabardah lie between Tchetchenia and Tcherkessia. They are not fortified by mountains, like the latter, and Russian cannon had awed them into submission. Their religious impressions had never deepened into fanaticism. The fiery missionaries sent among them by Schamyl had utterly failed of converting them. They had laughed at the threats of Schamyl. They had murdered Achwerdi Mahomet, his elect brother in the faith. The time had come for the Imam to smite them with his terrible arm.

"I am the root of the tree of Freedom," says his proclamation to them, in the year 1846,— "my Murids are the trunk, and ye are its branches; do not believe that the whole tree will die because one branch rots. God will lop off the rotten branches, and cast them into the eternal fire. Return, therefore, in penitence, and enroll yourselves among the warriors of the faith, and my favor shall be yours, and I will be your protector.

"But if you persist in giving more belief to the seductions of the Christian dogs than to my exhortations, then I will carry out the former threats of Kasi Mollah. Like black thunder-clouds my bands shall sweep over your aouls, and wring from you, by force, that which you deny to kindness. Blood shall mark my track, terror and desolation shall linger in my path; for where the power of words fails, the might of swords shall be on their side."

The Kabardians supposed that the power of Schamyl was broken by the loss of Dargo, and they took no notice of his threat. Suddenly he put himself at the head of twenty thousand warriors, and stormed across their country, plundering and burning, straight through the Russian lines, over two great rivers, from the Sunja to the Laba, a tract of more than two hundred miles in length. He left in his rear a Russian army seventy thousand strong, and all the forces on the Terek and the Sunja. He marched directly into the face of the

Northern army. Sixty aouls in Kabardah, and forty Kossack stanitzas, were destroyed. Even Stavropol was endangered. Before the alarm was given at either place, he had vanished, and, though encumbered with spoils and with hundreds of prisoners, he moved so fleetly through the passes of the hills, that he outran all obstacles to his retreat.

Schamyl recrossed the Sunja a few months later, and again during the following year, doing more or less injury to the Russian outposts, and eluding the slow grasp of the enemy by his tact or intrepidity. The Grand Duke, the present Emperor of Russia, took part in the campaign of 1850, and distinguished himself in an encounter with a horde of Tcherkessians. In 1852, Prince Baratinsky conducted a brilliant expedition in Tchetchenia, where, with fifteen hundred men, he found his way through the Devil's Pass into the aoul of Kankaleh; but on returning, with a few prisoners, he was attacked in the Pass, and escaped only after a heavy loss. Since then there have been but few important movements on either side.

We have told enough of these battles to illustrate the spirit in which the Circassians fight. They are actuated by various motives, some by the love of war, others by hope of booty, most of them by the eloquent persuasions of the Imam or by fear of his anger; but the governing principle that is implanted in their breasts, deeper than life, is — hatred of “the Muscovite.” Their goddess is, indeed,

“The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty”;

but they have no very noble conception of her, nor yet a quite defined notion of what they are fighting for. They follow no phantoms of “liberty, equality, fraternity”; they are not striving to cast the slough of an outworn form of government; they preach no theories of manifest destiny; the love of home and religious enthusiasm are only ancillary to the ruling passion. They drink in hatred of the Russian from the mother's breast; they breathe it in their mountain air. On the glazed eyes and stiffened faces of the seven hundred Circassians who were thrown into the Koissu by the Russians after the siege of Akhulgo, this passion was stamped in

horrible disfigurement. It was "the lust for death, the hate of Russians, and the last triumph of bloody revenge."

The women of the Caucasus have that high sense of honor, that "divine self-abnegation," which history has loved to attribute to the women of Sparta. "God be thanked!" says the poor mother whose son had fallen in the fight; "the son whom I conceived in sorrow and bore upon my breast was elected of God to be a martyr to freedom and the faith!"

The following translation of one of the Circassian war-songs might stir the heart of any people who have paid blood for liberty:—

"Raise, O raise the banner high,
Arm, arm all for Atteghei! *
Guard the valley, guard the dell;
Hearth and home, farewell, farewell!

"We will dare the battle strife,
We will gladly peril life;
Death or liberty 's the cry,
Win the day, or nobly die.

"Who would fly when danger calls?
Freemen's hearts are freedom's walls;
Heaven receives alone the brave;
Angels guard the patriot's grave.

"Beats there then a traitor's heart,
Duped by wily Russian art,
Who his land for gold would give?
Let him die, or, childless, live.

"Hark, O hark, the cannons roar!
Foe meets foe to part no more.
Quail, ye slaves, 'neath freemen's glance!
Victory 's ours! Advance, advance!"

After the disastrous victory of his army at Dargo, Nicholas determined that new measures for conducting the war must

* The native name for Circassia.

be devised. Schamyl was no longer the insignificant chief of a few rebellious, disunited hordes. He had become the sovereign of an entire nation. In spite of the obstacles which he encountered, arising from the quarrels of separate tribes and the absence of a common language, he had extended his control until all in Eastern Circassia acknowledged him as their father in religion and their leader in war. The trifling advantages which the Czar had gained in preceding years, by forts which were constantly in a state of siege and standing armies which were decimated by fevers every spring, were quite swept away by the energy of Schamyl. The Czar had been unfortunate in his choice of officers to conduct the war. They had all proved wholly inefficient. Yermoloff and Paskiewitsch, it is true, had been prematurely recalled, before they had put their designs into execution; but Rosen never was on confidential terms with the Emperor, Golowin lost his military reputation in one unsuccessful attack, and Neidhardt was recalled in disgrace, and died of a broken heart.

Count Woronzoff was an officer whose talents had been tried as governor of the Crimea. He had done good service in the expulsion of Napoleon, and he possessed so large estates and such personal popularity as it was thought might have caused the Czar even to be jealous of him. He was educated in England, and had imbibed ideas of government which would have probably been treasonable in one of less authority. After his capture of Dargo, Nicholas honored him with the title of Prince, and bestowed upon him the viceroyalty of the Caucasian provinces, with powers almost as extensive and irresponsible as those of the Czar himself. At the conference of Tiflis the aged general expressed his conviction that the subjugation of the Caucasus was not to be accomplished in a single campaign, but must be the result of policy and time. He recommended a reform in the army, and a plan of action which should be offensive or defensive as circumstances might require, but especially one which could be carried out to a thorough trial.

Woronzoff conducted the war with eminent success. His perfect justice and conciliatory temper had their influence over many races whom the sword had failed to subdue. But

he did not lay aside the sword. He won victories upon the Laba. Twenty thousand Abhasians, on the Black Sea, and the Shapsaks, most bitter enemies of Russia, on the Kuban, gave in their submission to him. To those who would not submit, as the Ubiehs and Tchigetes, he still allowed uninterrupted intercourse, for trade, with the border Cossacks. The restriction once laid upon the commerce in female slaves with Sinope and Samsoun was removed. His design was to separate the races as perfectly as possible, to raise lines of fortification between them, such as would render their union for warlike purposes impossible, and to confine Schamyl within narrow limits. This cordon of forts encircles the mountains with a belt of iron, and we cannot conceive how the Circassians, even under the inspiration of Schamyl, could have remained free for many years longer, had not the Eastern War given a new direction to the arms of Russia on the Black Sea.

Sixteen years ago, when the Circassians were driven to the extremity of despair by the dogged perseverance of the Russians,—when, their crops having failed, famine on the one hand, or surrender on the other, seemed to be the only alternative left,—they sent to England a most touching petition, for aid, in the name of humanity, against their encroaching foes. This was after the capture, by the Russians, of the *Vixen*, an English vessel, while trading on the coast of Circassia, as the Russians alleged, in contravention of their laws. For many years after this event, the Tcherkessians were made to indulge the vain hope that England would come to their relief. Mr. Bell, who passed two years in their country, seems to have held out to them much encouragement of English sympathy and aid, but with very little reason. The most intelligent of the mountain leaders longed to have some of the great nations of Europe reach out to them a helping hand. They wanted to have their independence recognized by the English government. They recalled the noble interference of England and the other powers of Europe in behalf of Greece, and compared their longer struggle and equally just cause with hers. “The Russians cannot conquer this country!” exclaimed one of them. “They may,

by means of their ships and cannon, possess themselves of some more points on our coast; but, granting they could gain the whole of it, that shall make no difference in our determination to resist to the last; for, if they gain these hills, we will retire to yon snowy mountains and fight them!"

But England had not learned, at that time, to regard Russian progress in the East with the sensitiveness which she has shown more recently; and Circassia got no answer to her prayer. When the storm-cloud, which has been gathering in Europe ever since the army of Napoleon sank under the snows of Moscow, took the shape of the present war, it was discovered that the Circassians might render important service to the Allies; and now, for the first time, they have received some aid from their Western friends. Louis Napoleon sent presents of muskets to them last September. English officers were also despatched to them; and they have co-operated successfully with the allied armies.

We have given a succinct and unvarnished statement of the condition of affairs in Circassia. Making every allowance for exaggeration in the wonderful stories which have been told of Schamyl and his army by English papers, we still believe that the contest between Russia and Circassia is one of deep significance in every point of view. We cannot but await with renewed interest the accounts of the battles in the Crimea, knowing that the future of Circassia and her brave defenders is to be decided there. The liberty for which they have been so long striving depends upon the result of the present war; not upon that of the fighting merely, but upon the diplomatic results which must be the terms of its conclusion. How many equally and more momentous issues are hanging on the same event!